



Texas Trail Challenge Club Newsletter

May/June 2024

Thoughts From Your President Bill Phillips



As some of you know, I'm an avid guitar player. (I'm much better at the guitar than I am on the back of a horse!) For the past few years, I have been teaching guitar and learning to ride with TTCC. As I have walked the path as both a teacher and a student, I've made some observations.

1. Three things I tell my guitar students:

***You won't get better if you don't put in the time,
You won't put in the time if you don't think you are getting better,
You are a poor judge of your own progress.***

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 4th/5th – East Texas Equifest,
Six RS Ranch – Cancelled

June 1st/2nd – Camp Reveille,
Reveille Peak Ranch – New Ride

June 1st – Registration opens for
Hog Wild, Reynolds Creek and for
Lost Concho Ride, Inks Ranch

Nearly everyone gets frustrated that they are not playing guitar or riding a horse as well as they would like, and they often jump to the conclusion that something must be wrong with them! A lot of people quit because they don't understand how long it takes to get good at something and they make a poor self-assessment.

2. Basic Mechanics: It takes a while to learn where to put your fingers to play a chord, but that is only the start. It's one thing to know how to do it, but another to do it fluently. If you are thinking about the basic mechanics, whether riding downhill or playing the guitar, you don't have it yet. Can I teach you to play "Stairway to Heaven"? Not until you have learned some basics. Opening a gate is a skill that requires knowing how to stop, walk forward, back, side pass, turn on the fore, turn on the hind, and stay calm through it all.

3. Slow is Fast: We tend to want to move forward too quickly. To really get good at a skill, it's best to do it slowly. Take your time and perfect it.

4. Light Bulbs: I find that a student can only process so much information at one time. We can only eat that elephant one bite at a time. The student may nod their head, but they really have no idea what I'm talking about. Then, at some later point, a light switches on and they get it! There is a lot going on in learning a skill. Cut yourself a break.

5. The Right Gear: "If only I had..." The search is eternal! Different saddle, pad, bridle, or horse... A different guitar, strings, pick etc. You think "if only" and then you let your instructor play your guitar or ride your horse and the result is so different. Good gear is only part of the solution.

6. Always Someone Better: We all start out in the learning process at "Sucks Minus" and it's a long way from there to a Blue Ribbon. Relax and enjoy the small successes. Riding or playing guitar with someone better helps us to grow. I take riding lessons from Greg Dial, and he takes guitar lessons from me. I wish I could ride like Greg, and he wishes he could play guitar like me.

As the Beatles sang... "It's a long and winding road." We should all enjoy the road to getting better.

Youth Clinic – March 23rd

We shaped the future this weekend! TTCC's second annual Youth Trail Ride and Clinic was a great success, with juniors from Abilene to Austin coming together at Parrie Haynes Ranch Equestrian Center to have fun learning, riding, and competing. A huge thank you to all the folks who made this possible: Alexandra Gillette McStay, our Youth Activities Coordinator; Tiffany Janke, our secretary and admin for the event; Carol Warren, Melissa Neal, Nancy Fenimore, Kelly Beard, Lissa Burnette-Rabon, and Karen Pantel, all of whom gave of themselves and shared their knowledge as judges/clinicians. We had a wealth of other volunteers on hand, too; some assisted judges, some rode as chaperones and mentors, and Carin Bauer-Eaton and husband Donnie Eaton graciously handled our transportation needs. Thank you all for helping make this event another success. This is who we are, folks; this is TTCC!



Zoe Parker on Daphne



Youth trail ride at clinic



Lissa Burnette-Rabon helping Lily Jordan on Shakar



Karen Pantel with Jaxson Monroe on Bluebell



Kelly Beard demonstrating chin and eyes up



Adult riders learning how to work the box

Spring Rider Clinic – March 24th

Continuing TTCC's horsemanship success story, our Spring Rider Clinic was one of our best! It takes a team to make these things happen, and y'all stepped up and made this club proud: judges/clinicians Tracee Casarez, Nancy Fenimore, Karen Pantel, Kelly Beard, Lissa Burnette-Rabon, and Melissa Neal braved cool and windy conditions, anxious horses, and a long day of learning...I'm sure everybody's brain hurt (horses, riders, and clinicians) by the time we were done...whole lotta learnin' goin' on after several hours of clinic and a few more of judged obstacles. I was proud to see so many new faces on board, and I'd like to thank Becky Kirkpatrick

Cash for volunteering to do some of the setup, logistics, and cleanup. Looking forward to seeing you all at the Fall Clinic at Monster Mash!

TIME by LeeAnn Boore

I believe the most valuable asset we have in horsemanship is our time. We do all to research everything that encompasses the care and training of our horses. The main need though, is often overlooked, time with our horses. Time to bond, time to ride, time with these wonderful partners. So many of our top riders have said again and again, to spend quality, not quantity time with our horses. I remember when I first started with this club, having a conversation with Mary Marczak over a libation. I was a bit frazzled on what to work on and began allowing the dreaded "yahbutts" to make a nest. Mary simply said, "Everyone needs to start somewhere". I took her advice to heart and started spending time with my horse. We cannot expect to pull our horses out of the pasture and perform like marathon runners. Any athlete needs to continue to work at their skill set in order to perform. We don't expect marathon runners to do their best after not running over the summer because it was too hot. It just means making a sacrifice to find the time in the day to get their training in. With TTCC, all of us like to do well. We all enjoy getting a ribbon and showing our accomplishments. We can't let those ribbons blind us from the real prize, time with our ponies. It's nice to see our friends, laugh, camp and ride, but spending quality time with these magnificent animals is the best prize. Don't let the competition blind us to what our real goals are, time in the saddle. It's not about competing with others; it's competing with yourself to make each ride better. Try something new. Think outside the box, or in TTCC in the box, and bond with your horse. Build a relationship. Spend some time with your ponies. A nice brush, a quick ask to move a hip while feeding, a fun game in the barn on a rainy day...time. And whether it's groundwork, riding or just plain calling them from the pasture, every minute you spend is a minute more of building a relationship. Time is the most precious commodity we have.



*LeeAnn at High Tail It,
photo by Rhonda Fryer*

Ride Recap

High Tail It was held on March 9 & 10 at Los Arroyos Ranch formerly known as Lazy F Ranch in Smiley, Texas. A brisk wind and chillier temps arrived with a cold front Friday night to make the Saturday ride invigorating. The second obstacle involved loping for Horsemen, so those who warmed up before riding out of camp were prepared. The wild phlox were absolutely glorious, and Rhonda Fryer took wonderful pictures of horse and rider among the blanket of pink flowers. Veterinarian Cheryl Sofaly demonstrated how to wrap your horse's leg as the learning moment which was used as an obstacle the next day. Another unique obstacle was ponying,



*Cheryl Sofaly showing
how to wrap a leg*

which elicited a great deal of spirited debate and was later discussed in the Senior Judges Forum. Judges Director Greg Dial said, "I'm proud of Teresa (Corgill) for trying to find a way to include this skill as an obstacle in an objective setting; this type of challenge is what makes us all better riders. For the future, I'd like to see us practice this skill in a more controlled setting with fewer variables, so expect to see this subject addressed in future learning moments and clinics." Greg went on to say that if you have any doubts about accomplishing this skill safely to seek guidance from a mentoring Horseman.

Smiley Ride was held April 13 & 14 at the Barnhart Q 5 Ranch in Berclair. Everyone said the weather was "absolutely perfect" and beautiful wildflowers, giant yucca, and unique wildlife sightings such as horny toads and green jays added to the South Texas weekend. Ride manager and Senior Judge Karen Pantel created fun and challenging obstacles on Saturday using members' brands. Delicious chicken fried steak and chicken filled the bellies of hungry riders Saturday evening. On Sunday, Senior Judge Carol Warren created obstacles around the theme of the IRS and filing income taxes such as trotting with a dollar bill under your seat and a drag with a bag of money.



Green Jays at the Smiley Ride

7IL Spring Fling - The weather at 7IL turned out to be lovely. Saturday was overcast with a nice breeze and Sunday was a little warm and muggy, but the showers held off for the ride. Jody Elliot, Teresa Ingram, and Debra Sannwaldt all had a rough start to their weekend but persevered and enjoyed the ride. Special thanks to Tiffany Janke, Mary Marczak, and Becky Cash for offering assistance. This is truly what makes the Texas Trail Challenge Club so special! Ride managers Susie Tilke and Nancy Fenimore hosted a hamburger dinner on Saturday night with desserts brought by riders. Trail obstacles were created by senior judge Kate Hollar.



Becky Cash and Jaxson riding with Debra Sannwaldt

Bugs were prolific so be sure and add insect repellent for yourself and your horse to your trailer. One of the more challenging obstacles on Saturday was a side pass through a slight depression. However, there was a puddle ranging in depth from one to three inches that the horses thought was a bottomless pit! Riders were advised in the future to practice on different types of terrain and through water. Kelly Beard judged riders going over a white tarp which turned out to be a non-event. It is amazing that sometimes obstacles you think will be very simple become a challenge, and obstacles you think will be difficult become very simple. See you at the next ride!

Thank you members for sharing your photographs, they are an important addition to the newsletter!

February 2024 BOD Meeting Summary:

- A motion was made and approved to allow Kate and LeeAnn to be co-chairs for the Prize Committee for 2025 Celebration. After the BOD meeting, it was determined that LeeAnn will be heading up the Prize Committee for 2025.
- Bill mentioned the 2023 Iron Rider (2nd time) buckles had just arrived and he will try to get them handed out at upcoming rides.
- According to Kris Maley, the TETRA meeting held on February 3rd went very well.
- The subject of the next TTCC President was discussed. Bill so graciously agreed to stay "Interim" President through 2024, which was unanimously approved by remaining members of the TTCC board. The TTCC BOD will discuss at a later date the proper process of electing a new President.
- Discussion about the amount to charge Ride Manager's for a portion of the prize ribbons and liability insurance. The approximate total for ribbons and insurance for the year is around \$3,200. Karen made a motion to charge each Ride Manager a total of \$100 per ride weekend to help with the cost of ribbons and insurance; 2nd by Greg; approved by all.
- Karen stated that the 2024 Ride Manager's Manual will be sent to all Ride Managers by the end of February.
- Brought up for discussion by Karen was the subject of the wrong buckles handed out for High

Point/Reserve High Point winners in both the Tenderfoot and Maverick divisions. The buckles for these respective divisions listed Champion and Reserve Champion instead of High-Point and Reserve High Point. Karen will get with Molly's Buckles to get an approximate cost to replace buckles with correct wording. Discussion tabled to next meeting.

- There are a few new Ride Managers for 2024, so Karen made a motion to honor the existing approved \$100 allotment granted to Ride Managers to purchase cones/signs etc.; 2nd by Mary Ann; all approved.
- Current bank balance is around \$6,000.
- The silent auction held in conjunction with the Celebration event brought in about \$1,335.
- Tiffany would like to highlight the donors of the silent auction in the next TTCC Newsletter.
- The upcoming Youth Clinic attendance is at 15 riders.
- According to Mary Ann, 37 membership applications were turned in at Celebration.

March 2024 BOD Meeting Summary:

- Bill reminded all that the spring General Meeting will be held in conjunction with the Smiley Ride on April 12th. He will need questions/thoughts from each board member before that.
- Bill was contacted by the McKinney County Community College about an event on April 20th, and Bill is willing to represent TTCC.
- There was much discussion about the issue of a lost rider being disqualified at the High Tail It ride held in March. In summary, a lost rider should get a score of a "0" if he/she can't make it to an obstacle before the judge leaves, but should not be disqualified. Bill made a motion to clarify TTCC rules that if a rider misses an obstacle and is able to make the proceeding obstacles in numerical order, then the rider should be allowed to complete the remainder of the obstacles. Seconded by Greg; approved by all.
- Discussion about having the buckles, that were incorrectly designed for Maverick and Tenderfoot High-Point and Reserve High-Point placings, redone. A motion was made by Bill to have such buckles redesigned; seconded by Greg; approved by all.
- Tiffany brought up the discussion of a budget for year-end awards because Leann is needing a budget. Bill made a motion to begin with a \$6,000 for year-end awards; 2nd by Karen; approved by all.
- Tiffany mentioned there are "goodie" bags that were left over from 2023 Youth Clinic. Ideas were presented to have Ride Managers possibly purchase the bags to use as prizes for his/her ride or use the bags as door prizes for next year's Celebration.
- According to Mary Ann, there are currently 136 paid members.
- Mary Ann suggested that we spotlight a TTCC member in each Newsletter. A name would be drawn from the "paid" members list.
- Mary Ann posed the question as to how obstacles are reviewed for safety. Are they sent to the Senior Judge first? Because of the possible safety issues associated with the "ponying" obstacle that was part of the High Tail It ride; Greg mentioned it might be a good idea for the Senior Judges to send him the obstacles for review first.

April General Meeting:

- Karen Pantel (Ride Director) stated that she will be sending out the annual Ride Sanction form and Website form to current Ride Managers at the end of April. Deadline to return the forms to Karen is June 1st, 2024.
- Bill Phillips (Acting President) discussed the issue of members signing up for rides and then cancelling at the last minute. With low turnouts at the last couple of rides, this has become a hardship for the Ride Managers. The BOD will be discussing a new sign-up/cancellation policy for 2025.
- Bill also mentioned that the number of riders allowed to sign up for a ride will be increased to 100 to help eliminate the influx of individuals trying to sign up the day a ride opens up for

registration. There is not a date set for this increase to take place.

- Tiffany (Treasurer) provided a budget summary report to all attending members.
- Mary Ann (Membership Director) discussed her idea of highlighting a member in each Newsletter. A name will be drawn from the current membership list, and Mary Ann will contact that individual to get permission first, and then if allowed, collect information the member is willing to share.
- Greg (Judge's Director) discussed the issue of a disqualified rider from a previous ride. See note above highlighted in the March Meeting Summary.

Deadline for July-August newsletter is June 1st